Incentives and rewards: what do adult populations truly want? Insights from the physical activity loyalty (PAL) scheme


Published in:
Trials

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:
Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal

Publisher rights
© 2015 McAneney et al. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The Creative Commons Public Domain Dedication waiver (http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/) applies to the data made available in this article, unless otherwise stated.

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Queen's University Belfast Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The Research Portal is Queen's institutional repository that provides access to Queen's research output. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact openaccess@qub.ac.uk.
Incentives and rewards: what do adult populations truly want? Insights from the physical activity loyalty (PAL) scheme

Helen McAneney1*, Ruth Hunter2,3, Frank Kee2,3, Mike Clarke1,3

From 3rd International Clinical Trials Methodology Conference
Glasgow, UK. 16-17 November 2015

Background
Trials depend on good recruitment and retention, but efforts to improve these have had varying success. This may be due to inadequate understanding of what participants would value in return for taking part. An opportunity arose in one trial to investigate the incentives that might help recruit and retain participants to another.

Aim
To determine what adults value as an incentive for involvement in a trial.

Methods
In the PAL Scheme, employees used a ‘loyalty card’ to monitor their physical activity over 12 weeks. The incentive group (n=199) collected points and received rewards for physical activity (1 minute = 1 point, max: 30 pts/day). A comparator group (n=207) self-monitored their physical activity only. Points could be redeemed as retail vouchers. 17 different incentives were available, from 75 pts (£2.50, a sandwich) to 1800 pts (£60, 1 month gym membership).

Results
148 of the 199 intervention participants used their card at least once, earning a mean of 374 pts. 121 earned sufficient to collect a reward and 76 redeemed points for vouchers but only 48 exchanged the vouchers for rewards. The most popular reward was not that of highest monetary value: two cinema tickets (300 pts, £10).

Conclusions
The value that participants place on a reward might be more important than its monetary value. Some might appreciate receiving the voucher, without spending it. In choosing incentives to boost trial participation, it may help to allow people to choose from a variety of rewards, rather than reimbursing in money.

Authors’ details
1Northern Ireland Network for Trials Methodology Research, Centre for Public Health, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, UK. 2Centre for Public Health, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, UK. 3Centre of Excellence for Public Health, Belfast, UK.

Published: 16 November 2015